(a) whether a number of envoys/Ambassadors etc. is recruited from among politicians/intellectuals etc. without any competitive test etc. for Indian Foreign Services;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of such appointees as on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) and (b) Ambassadors/High Commissioners are appointed on the basis of their suitability, relevant experience and eminence. In a few exceptional cases, Ambassadors/High Commissioners have been appointed from outside the Foreign Service for their recognized eminence and experience. The competetive examination is meant for the Foreign Service Office at the time of their recruitment to Service and is not applicable to the non-career Ambassadors/High Commissioners.

(c) At present, seven Missions are headed by Ambassadors/High Commissioners who are non-diplomats or retired civil servants namely, S/Shri L.M. Singhvi, Naresh Chandra, Kushok Bakula, D.S. Pannun, M.H. Ansari, Gopal K. Gandhi and Prabhakara Jha.

Harassment of Indians in Saudi Arabia

3505. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMACHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to cases of harassment of Indians in Saudi Arabia;

(b) whether some Indians have been reported missing in Saudi Arabia since 5th February, 1997; and

(c) if so, the step taken to trace them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) Yes, Sir. Government's attention has been drawn to some instances of harassment of Indians by their private sponsors arising out of change in sponsorship, non-payment of contracted salary, change in terms of contract, etc. These complaints are brought to the attention of Embassy of India, Riyadh/Consulate General of India, Jeddah directly by the Indian employees or their well-wishers or through the Ministry.

(b) Six Indians are reportedly missing in Saudi Arabia since 5.2.1997.

In addition, one, Shri B.D. Baliga who was employed as Materials Manager in Eastern Petro Chemicals, Jubail, Saudi Arabia was reported missing as of 5.2.1997. Subsequently, the Embassy learnt that he had been detained at the airport for unauthorisedly possessing some documents belonging to his employer. Through the efforts of the Embassy, Shri B.D. Baliga has been released and has returned to India.

(c) Whenever any Indian is reported missing, the matter is promptly taken up with the Saudi Foreign Ministry. Simultaneously, contacts are established with sponsors and local Indians who are known to him.

गुट निरपेक्ष आंदोलन के देशों की समस्याएं

3506. **डा० महेश चन्द्र शर्मा:** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या 7 अप्रैल, 1997 को आयोजित गुट निरपेक्ष आंदोलन के बारहवें मंत्री-स्तरीय सम्मेलन के उद्घाटन सत्र में दिये गये भाषण में यह कहा गया है, "यह खेद का विषय है कि इस महत्वपूर्ण मोड़ पर हमारे ऊपर नये प्रश्न, प्रतिबंध और शर्तें आरोपित किये जा रहे हैं";

(ख) यदि हां, तो इन प्रश्नों, प्रतिबंधों और शर्तों का ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ग) ऐसे नये प्रश्न, प्रतिबंध व शर्तें आरोपित करने वाले प्राधिकारियों और निकायों के नाम क्या हैं; और

(घ) सरकार इन आरोपणों का मुकाबला करने के लिये क्या कार्यवाही करने की विचार रखती है?

निधि और न्याय मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमाकांत डी० खलप): (क) तत्कालीन प्रधान मंत्री श्री एच०डी० देवेगौड़ा ने दिनांक 07.04.1997 को गुट-निरपेक्ष आंदोलन के देशों के बारहवें मंत्री स्तरीय सम्मेलन के उद्घाटन के अवसर पर कहा था:

"यह खेद है कि इस मोड पर हमने देखा है कि नये मसले, बाध्यताएं तथा शर्तें हम पर थोपी जा रही है।"

(ख) और (ग) कुछ विकसित देश एक पक्षीय तौर पर तथा बहुपक्षीय संस्थानों के माध्यम से जिन बाध्यताओं और शर्तों को थोपना चाहते हैं उनमें निवेशकर्ताओं के अधिकार, राष्ट्रीय कानूनों को क्षेत्र-बाह्य लागू करना, अन्तर्वेधी और चयनित मानवाधिकार कार्य सूची और श्रम मानकों का प्रयोग करना, बौद्धिक सम्पदा अधिकारों का तीव्र उन्नयन, अधिकतम तीव्र गति से अर्थव्यवस्थाओं को खोल सकने वाली पर्यावरण से जुड़ी शर्तें तथा दबाव शामिल हैं।

(घ) भारत इन मसलों पर हठधर्मिता मतभेदों का विरोध करता है। सरकार हमारे विचारों से सहमत देशों के विचार और स्थितियों का समन्वयन करते समय द्विपक्षीय तथा बहुपक्षीय वार्तालापों में भारत के हितों को प्रक्षेपित करेगी तथा उनकी रक्षा करेगी।

Chinese request to India for return of a Canon

3507. DR. SHRIKANT RAMACHANDRA JICHKAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chinese Government has requested the return of a Canon on which a treaty about the Opium War and the lease of Hong Kong is written and which is now in the Raj Bhawan of Calcutta;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the response of Government thereto; and

(d) the response of the West Bengal Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE, (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Irregularities in the State Bank of Patiala

3508. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Bank of Patiala Staff Union had requested Government for a CBI/ Enforcement Department enquiry into the alleged misuse of power and position by top executives of State Bank of Patiala;

(b) if so, what action has been taken on the request and if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Union had also drawn attention to abnormal increase in non-performing assets and huge amounts being written of through compromise proposals;

(d) what action has been taken on the issue brought to the notice of Government by the Union by their letter dated 19th January, 1997; and

(e) if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (e) Centre of Indian Trade Unions forwarded to Government a letter dated 19.1.1997 from the General Secretary, State Bank of Patiala Staff Union (Pb.) regarding abnormal increase in non-performing assets, huge amounts being written of through compromise proposals etc. The allegations have been examined by the bank and are not found to be substantiated. The bank has reported that the percentage of gross non-performing assets to total advance was 10.93% as on 31.3.1996 as against 17.12% for public sector banks as a whole. The percentage of amounts written off through compromise proposals to total advances works out to 0.0003% for the year 1996-97.